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Royal Geographical Society.

1837.

AT THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 15, 1837,

The following Report from the Council was read:—

The Council has again to congratulate the Society upon the steady increase in the number of its members, affording a gratifying proof, it is willing to believe, of the interest felt by the public in the promotion and encouragement of geographical science.

Thirty-nine new members have been elected during the past year; and the Society now consists of 545 members, exclusive of foreign, honorary, and corresponding members.

Yet while recording the fact of an increase of numbers, the Council cannot be unmindful that the Society has to lament the loss of many valuable members, and especially of him, whose melancholy death in Northern Africa must be fresh in the remembrance of every member of the Society;—young, zealous, and enterprising, the traveller had surmounted all the difficulties opposed to him in Marocco, in Sús, in Wádi Nún, and had even traversed half the desert which separated him from Timbuctoo, when he fell a victim to the treachery of the faithless Arabs; and the name of Davidson must now be added to those of Hornemann, Park, Ledyard, Burckhardt, Laing, Clapperton, and Lander, as the most eminent amongst those who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of African discovery.

In our own country, we cannot pass unnoticed the death of William Marsden, Esq., a zealous and valuable member, who took a warm interest in our welfare, and devoted much time,

during a long and active life, to the study of ethnography, an important and, in this country, too much neglected branch of geography. A donation of nearly a hundred volumes to the library of the Society will perpetuate his name as one of our most liberal friends and benefactors.

In common with all those who are interested in one of the most important branches of geography, we have to record the almost irreparable loss of Captain James Horsburgh, the Hydrographer to the East India Company, to whose joint industry, skill, and perseverance this nation is so deeply indebted for our present knowledge of all the maritime regions of the Eastern world.

We have also to regret the loss of a distinguished foreign honorary member, Professor Frederick Hoffmann, who died at an early age. He is perhaps better known by his geological labours; but his great map of North-western Germany, and his work on the Orography and Geognosy of the same district, published in 1830, give him a high claim as a geographer.

Within these few days, also, the Council has learnt that a corresponding member of the Society, Don Ignacio Iberri, a General of Engineers in the Mexican Service, has fallen a victim to his exertions, while exploring the site of some ancient remains lately discovered in the mountains near Jalapa.

Finances.—The state of the finances, the details of which are annexed, continues satisfactory. The expenditure for the past year has been considerable, in consequence of 490*l.* having been paid towards the expedition into British Guayana; 350*l.* towards that in Southern Africa; and 100 guineas for engraving the die of the Royal Medal; yet it is gratifying to add that no necessity exists for touching upon the capital stock invested in the funds.

Publications.—The Journal of the Society for the year 1836, as in former years, has been published in two parts, and the first part of that for 1837 is now laid on the table. The demand for it by the public continues, and the marked increase in the sale of the last volume, having exceeded 400 in the space of six months, besides the 600 copies issued gratuitously to members,

would seem fully to justify the decision come to by the Council, that the illustrations in future should be engraved on copper; and that, however slight the sketch map of a country in illustration of a memoir, its execution should be confided to our most able artists to ensure accuracy as far as the information we possess will enable us to do so; a small increase of expense will, of course, be incurred, but the object gained of never giving currency to any but the most perfect maps our means will supply, more than compensate for any such consideration.

Nor can the Council omit to record its testimony to the able and liberal assistance it has received in this department from Mr. John Arrowsmith, without whose experience and often gratuitous co-operation it could not have carried its wishes into effect.

The first edition of the second volume of the Journal having been exhausted, while a demand still continues for it both by the public at large and by new members joining the Society, who are desirous of procuring complete sets of the Society's Transactions, the Council has directed it to be reprinted, and it is now ready for delivery.

Mr. Macdougall's Translation of Captain Graah's Account of Danish Discoveries on the East Coast of Greenland, published at the expense of the Society, is now laid on the table. The delay that has occurred in its publication, owing to the melancholy death of the translator, has enabled the Council to take advantage of the kind offer of Captain James Ross to add some notes to the work, which, from his long experience on the coast of Greenland, will doubtless much enhance the value of the book. Members may now obtain it, *gratis*, at the Society's apartments.

The Society's other publication, namely, the Grammar of the Cree Language, by Mr. Howse, which was undertaken in conjunction with the Church Missionary Society, advances slowly (as, indeed, from the nature of the work it may be expected) towards completion. It will probably appear during the present year.

His Majesty's Donation.—The royal premium for 1836 has been awarded by the Council to Captain Robert Fitz Roy, Royal Navy, for his recent survey of the coasts of South America,

from the entrance of the Rio de la Plata on the east coast, to the port of Guayaquil on the coast of Peru,—for the zeal, energy, and liberality shown by him in the conduct of the survey,—and for the various geographical discoveries made by him during its progress, as well as in the circumnavigation of the globe.

Yet while thus acknowledging the importance of the mass of information brought home by Captain Fitz Roy,—perhaps not exceeded by any expedition since the time of Cook and of Flinders,—the Council feel it incumbent upon them to render justice to other enterprising travellers, whose claims to the gratitude of this Society and their country stand high; and first, we may mention Lieutenant Wellsted of the Indian Navy, who has travelled over more than 700 miles in the interior of the province of 'Omán in Arabia; and also penetrated seventy miles from the south coast to some remarkable ruins: the details of both these journeys, with a valuable map, presented to the Society by Mr. Wellsted, will be found in the volume laid on the table. Nor can the Council omit to notice how largely at various times this officer has contributed to the Society's Journal.

Dr. Andrew Smith, also, who headed the late expedition in Southern Africa, has explored the sources of the Orange River,—reached as far as the southern tropic, obtained much information respecting tribes hitherto unknown to us even by name, and brought home a very rare and valuable collection of objects of natural history, is specially entitled to very honourable mention here.

Major Mitchell, Surveyor-General in New South Wales, who having left Sydney in March, 1836, has traced the river Darling into the Murray, thence crossed to the southward, made the sea-coast at Portland Bay, and returned to Sydney, comprising a journey of about 2000 miles, the details of which, however, have not yet reached England, has a high claim to our notice.

Colonel Chesney, though last not least in persevering energy, by which he has overcome every obstacle that opposed itself to his progress, and proved the possibility of steam navigation in the great river Euphrates between Bír and the Persian Gulf;—nor can the Council omit to express its regret at the loss of the astronomer to this expedition, Lieutenant Murphy, R.E., who, after

having enriched the expedition with numerous observations, not only on the shores of the Euphrates, but in Syria and along the foot of Mount Taurus, fell a victim to typhus fever at Basrah.

Auxiliary Associations.—The Geographical Society of Bombay still continues its labours in promoting the general objects for which it was instituted, and the Council must gratefully acknowledge some valuable communications received during the past year, several of which were published in the sixth volume of the Journal; and a notice on Sind by Captain Burnes, appears in the part now laid on the table.

Another Association, which, from its position, will have great opportunities of being useful, has been formed at Caïro, under the name of the Egyptian Society; and the Council is taking measures to establish a correspondence with it, which it is hoped will lead to a better acquaintance than we at present possess with the people and country towards the sources of the Nile.

Original Expeditions.—The plan of the Arctic expedition under Captain Back was so fully detailed at the last annual meeting, that the Council only advert to it now to state that his Majesty's ship Terror having been thoroughly equipped, extra provisioned for eighteen months, or in case of necessity for two years, sailed from England on the 17th of last June, and was seen below Salisbury Island in Hudson's Straits, on the 1st of August; since which, no accounts have been received, nor can they be expected, at the earliest, before November.

Of the expeditions directly patronized by the Society, that into the interior of British Guayana is still in progress. A detailed report of Mr. Schomburgk's proceedings during the first year, was published in the last part of Volume VI. of this Journal. Since then, Mr. Schomburgk has ascended the river Courantyne, the eastern boundary of the Colony, as far as $4^{\circ} 15'$ north latitude, $57^{\circ} 30'$ west longitude, where a series of cataracts prevented any further progress: the river here was 900 yards wide.

On his return, Mr. Schomburgk proceeded up the river of Berbice, with the hope of thus being enabled to reach the Sierra Acaray, or line of separation of waters between the basins of the

Amazons and the Essequibo. The result of this expedition is not yet known.

In South Africa, Captain Alexander left Cape Town on the 15th of September, 1836, and following the road through Clan William and Kamiesberg, had crossed the Orange river on his road to the Damaras country; and on the 1st January, 1837, the date of the last accounts, was at Nabees—(Warm Bath)—a missionary station in Great Namaqua Land, on the banks of the Giep, about forty miles north of the Orange river.

But the Council would invite the special notice of the Society to an expedition about to proceed to Australia, in which the Council has felt itself called upon to take an active part. In the month of December two officers of his Majesty's army, Lieut. Grey, of the 83rd regiment, and Lieut. Lushington, of the 9th regiment, who have lately attained the highest honours in the Senior Department of the Military College at Sandhurst, offered their services to prosecute geographical discoveries in whatever part of Australia the Society would recommend. The favourable opportunity for pressing so important an expedition was not lost; a Deputation composed of the President, Captain Beaufort, and Mr. Murchison, waited upon Lord Glenelg, pointing out the advantages likely to accrue from exploring that country, and also recommending a nautical survey to complete the part of the north-west coasts left unfinished, and to examine more thoroughly Bass' and Torres' Straits. The Deputation was most favourably received, and having met with the sanction of his Majesty's Government, a grant of 1000*l.* was obtained towards the expenses of the land expedition, to start from Swan River to explore in a north-east direction; at the same time a survey of the coasts was ordered, and his Majesty's ship Beagle, commanded by Captain Wickham, just returned from a ten years' survey on the shores of South America, will sail early in June, carrying out the party composing the land expedition to Swan River,—an expedition which the Society must look to with great interest, as calculated to solve the great geographical problem in that portion of the globe, the existence, or the contrary, of a great inland sea; and to examine that portion of the north-eastern coast, known by the name of Dampier's Archi-

pelago, in search of the entrance of a river, if any such exist, that may enable us to obtain access to the interior, and to spread the blessings of civilization throughout this hitherto unexplored country.

Foreign and Colonial Correspondence.—The vacancies in the list of foreign members have been filled up by the election of Baron Hügel, of Vienna; Count Gräberg af Hemsö, at Florence; General Pelet, Directeur du Dépôt de la Guerre, at Paris; Professor Finn Magnussen, at Copenhagen, President of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries; Colonel Försell, at Stockholm; Don M. Fernandez de Navarrete, at Madrid; and Professor Heinrich Berghaus, at Berlin; while to our list of corresponding members have been added M. D'Avezac, at Paris; Councillor José Joaquim da Costa de Macedo, at Lisbon; General Don Juan Orbegoso, in Mexico; Professor Paul Chaix, at Geneva; Baron Wrangel, at St. Petersburg; and Herr Adolph Erman, at Berlin; and the Council has great pleasure in witnessing the gradual and steady increase of the foreign and colonial correspondence of the Society.

Library.—A list of the accessions made to the Library during the past year is printed with this Report.

The progress made towards obtaining a complete collection of books and maps is far from satisfactory, and many geographical works of the first importance are entirely wanting. Nothing has yet been done towards procuring suitable apartments; but with the pecuniary means in the possession of the Society, it is confidently hoped, that this great desideratum for adding to the convenience of the members, and securing greater accommodation for those who may wish to consult the maps and books belonging to the Society in the morning, may not be long delayed.

TREASURER'S BALANCE SHEET, 1836.

Dr.

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	£.	s.	d.
Balance in hand, January 1 st	110	14	1
Intrance of 29 Members at 3 <i>l.</i>	117	0	0
Composition of 19 Members at 17 <i>l.</i>	323	0	0
Subcription of 208 Members at 2 <i>l.</i>	416	2	0
arrears paid up	48	0	0
Dividends on Stock (4800 <i>l.</i> at 3 <i>l</i>)	168	0	0
Books sold in 1835	112	2	0
House Rent	•	•	•
Salaries	•	•	•
Printing Journal, Vol. V.	•	•	•
Illustrations for Journal, Vol. V.	•	•	•
Vol. VI. Part. I.	•	•	•
General printing	•	•	•
Royal Premium	•	•	•
Die for Medal and 2 Silver Medals	•	•	•
Guayana Expedition	•	•	•
South African Expedition	•	•	•
Collector's Salary	•	•	•
Graah's Charts of Greenland	•	•	•
Printing, Cree Grammar	•	•	•
Books, Maps, and Bookbinding	•	•	•
Stationery	•	•	•
Fining and Lights	•	•	•
Portage, carriage of Parcels, &c.	•	•	•
Postage of letters	•	•	•
Expenses of Evening Meetings	•	•	•
Furniture and repairs in rooms	•	•	•
Attendance and wages of Housekeeper	•	•	•
Insurance and Advertisements	•	•	•
Transfer of Stock	•	•	•
Balance in hand	•	•	•
£2,293 18 1			

The above accounts for 1836 have been examined by us and found correct.

examined by us and found
B. FRERE,
J. TREMAYNE RODD.

(Signed)

(Signed) JOHN BIDDULPH,

ESTIMATE FOR 1837.

Dr.

Cr.

	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Balance in hand, 1st January	• • •	33 1 7
Probable amount of subscriptions as last year:—		
Entrance of 39 members	£117 0 0	
Composition of 19 members	323 0 0	
Subscription of 208 members	416 0 0	
	—————	856 0 0
Arrears likely to be recovered	• • •	150 0 0
Dividends on stock	• • •	168 0 0
Sale of Journal	• • •	100 0 0
Royal Premium	• • •	52 10 0
Office expenses, including fiving, lights, refreshments at meetings, attendance, messages, postage, &c.		100 0 0
	—————	—————
		£1,359 11 7
		£1,313 10

JOHN WASHINGTON.